

Deutero-Canonica.

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International Society of the Apocrypha.

Scheme of Study.

MIDSUMMER TO MICHAELMAS, 1905.

The Second Book of Esdras.

THE Second Book of Esdras (which the 6th Article of Religion styles "the 4th Book") consists of three distinct works, most probably originally composed in Greek, but no Greek version has as yet been found.

A. The first two chapters, which deal with the rejection of the Jews and the call of the Gentiles, are of Christian origin, and date from about the middle of the 3rd century. The references to the New Testament are obvious.

B. The next twelve chapters, containing seven visions, were written probably in Domitian's reign (A.D. 81—96) by a Jew, although he seems to have been imbued with some Christian ideas. The most striking portion of this apocalyptic work is the third and longest of the seven visions.—"The Vision of Judgment,"—which, in recent years, has been amplified by the discovery of a lost portion of the Latin translation.

C. The last two chapters, containing woes and warnings, are of Christian origin, and were probably written between A.D. 260—270.

The Church of Rome has excluded II. Esdras from her Canon; and the Church of England does not give it any place in her Lectionary. It is therefore one of the least known and consequently one of the most despised of the Deutero-Canonical Books. S. Jerome, who owned that he had never read it, rejected it with contempt; and the most learned of the Fathers has ever had a large following. Yet "the Apocalypse of Esdras" deals with the great problems of human existence and destiny, boldly and reverently; it contains many noble and sublime passages; its teaching on the Intermediate State is full of interest; and it is well deserving of far more attention from theologians and writers than it has yet received.

II. Esdras.

A.

Ch. I.—II.—48. The message of Esdras concerning the rejection of the Jews for their ingratitude and rebellion, and the call and incoming of the Gentiles to everlasting rest. The saints on Mount Sion crowned by the Son of God.

B.

Ch. III. 1—36. Introduction to the Seven Visions.

Ch. IV.—V. 20. The First Vision. Of things to come.

Ch. V., 21—VI. 34. The Second Vision. Of God's rule over the world.

Ch. VI., 35—IX. 25. The Third Vision. Of Final Judgment.

Ch. IX., 26—X, 59. The Fourth Vision. Of the sorrowing woman transformed into a city.

Ch. XI., 1—XII. 51. The Fifth Vision. Of the eagle and the lion.

Ch. XIII., 1—38. The Sixth Vision. Of the man rising from the sea.

Ch. XIV., 1—48. The Seventh Vision. Of the commission to restore the Books of the Law.

C.

Ch. XV., 1—XVI., 78.—The woes of the nations, and the warning to the servants of the Lord.

I. S. A. Notes.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN (Dr. Peacocke), the Primus of the Scottish Church (Bishop G. H. Wilkinson), and the Chief Rabbi (Dr. Adler) have become three of the Patrons of the Society.

THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY (Dr. Wordsworth) who is the President of the Central Society of Sacred Study, writes:—"I am interested to read *Deutero-Canonical*, and wish the Society of the Apocrypha success. I shall be glad to encourage its work at the Synod."

THE BISHOP OF BARROW IN FURNESS (Dr. Ware) who has joined the Society, offers to send a copy of his pamphlet *The Apocrypha in the New Testament* to any member who applies to him at The Abbey, Carlisle. A penny stamp should be sent to cover postage.

MR. THOMAS HARDY, the novelist of Wessex, has become a member of the Society.

THE following reply has been received from the Dean of Westminster (Dr. Armitage Robinson) by a member of the I. S. A., who asked how the Dean's statement that the Jewish people were an inspired people, and that, therefore, even their national literature, is an inspired literature, bore upon the Apocrypha:—"Doubtless with proper limitations the statement which you quote may apply to the Jewish Deutero-Canonical books. But the tide of inspiration was not then in full flow, as in the earlier life of the people: and this, I take it, is recognised by the secondary position which the Church has assigned to these books."

A SUGGESTION has been made that the members of the I. S. A. should collect—(1) Quotations from or allusions to the Apocrypha which occur in the writings of poets and novelists, ancient and modern, and (2) Epitaphs with Apocryphal texts; and that the collection should be printed in the Quarterly Paper. Doubtless such a collection would interest some of the members of the Society, and any contributions shall be printed in a future issue. The Rev. W. H. Daubney has already done something in this direction in his book on *The Use of the Apocrypha*, but it is perhaps little realised how largely the Deutero-Canonical Books have been utilised by literary men and women, and how frequently texts from Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus appear in monumental inscriptions.

A STRONG FEELING exists among some of the members of the I. S. A. that those books which may be called the 'unofficial' Apocrypha of the Old Testament, and also the Apocrypha of the New Testament should not be regarded as outside the scope of the Society's study and interest. This feeling is, undoubtedly a right one; and although the Deutero-Canonical books will take precedence, yet the other 'Apocrypha' will not be neglected.

A CLERICAL MEMBER of the I. S. A. having read "The Praise of Famous Men" (Ecclesiasticus xliiv), as the Lesson at the unveiling of a memorial brass to some worthy, was astounded to read in the local paper that the choice of the Lesson was "a stroke of genius." The well known passage, as the late Dean Stanley remarks in his *Jewish Church*, has "been heard from generation to generation in the festivals of the great benefactors of Christendom, or when the illustrious of the earth are committed to the grave." The words with which the passage opens "Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us," have in recent times been attributed to John Bright! Is there need of a Society of the Apocrypha?

Recommended Books.

On Holy Scripture and Criticism. By H. E. Ryle, D.D., Bishop of Winchester. (Macmillan, 4s. 6d.) This book should be read by every-one interested in the Higher Criticism, and especially by those prejudiced against it; for here we have a sweet reasonableness, a deep devotion, and sound scholarship combined. The seventh chapter is on The Value of the Apocrypha, and the President of the I.S.A. shows (a) that a study of the Deutero-Canonical Books instructively illustrates the problems presented by the literature of the Old Testament (b) that the books of the Maccabees describe one of the most heroic chapters in the world's history, and (c) that the Apocrypha illustrates the progress of Jewish religious thought. We quote a portion of the passage which concludes the chapter:—"The Apocrypha forms part of the literature of the age, upon which the Wisdom and the Love of God descended in the form of a servant. The Apocrypha, much as men despise it, formed as it were part of the air which He deigned to breathe. How need we say more of its 'value'? The truth about the time and the people into which He was born must be scrutinized from every aspect. The literature of the Apocrypha furnishes one such aspect. In the history of all histories we cannot afford to ignore the witness of this group of writings."

The Old Testament and its Messages. By E. C. S. Gibson, D.D., (Wells Gardner, 3s. 6d.) The sermons and papers gathered together in this book represent an attempt to give some little help towards a right understanding and an intelligent use of the Old Testament. Dr. Gibson deals in an interesting manner with the early narratives of Genesis, Old Testament miracles, 'incomprehensible' passages in translations of the Psalms, and the like; and many of his explanations of difficulties will carry conviction to those who fear either the rationalistic or the critical movement. Sermons XXIV and XXV on The Apocrypha and the Book of Wisdom will be read with eagerness by members of the I.S.A., and we are glad to note that the new Bishop of Gloucester deems it "a real misfortune that these books which we commonly call the Apocrypha should be so little known, and that their true position and value should be so little understood..... They are in all probability less familiar now than they were in any previous century of the Church's history, either before or after the Reformation." As to the Book of Wisdom, Dr. Gibson writes:—"I would venture to suggest that to read daily a chapter out of this most beautiful book would be a devotional exercise that would be profitable for all. It would give us a new and deeper sense of the great truth that 'God is love,' and would send us forth to our daily work with fresh courage, inspired (to use a phrase which we owe to its author) with a hope 'full of immortality.'"

The Variorum Apocrypha. By C. J. Ball, M.A. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 6s. 6d.) The faulty readings and defective renderings of the Authorised Version of the Apocrypha are here amended by diligent use of the best modern critical texts, and by comparison of the views of various commentators, old and new. In this way Mr. Ball has produced a valuable "commentary," succinct yet luminous. It is sometimes said by the cynical that commentators too often pass lightly over real difficulties, and labour to explain the obvious; but the reverse method is certainly employed here. The concluding passage of the Preface, deserves reproduction:—"The writer does not think it necessary on the present occasion to review objections, and so to revive the memory of past attacks upon these venerable scriptures. The progress of research, the growth and diffusion of special knowledge, the modern sense of religious continuity, the wider views now prevailing or tending to prevail in the departments of sacred history and criticism may seem to render apology for the Apocrypha superfluous, if not unmeaning. Whether sheltered within the Canon, or suspiciously segregated outside the Canon, or suspended between heaven and earth by controversial subtleties, a collection of books which has survived the changes and chances of two thousand years may safely claim to be valued on its merits, and received as its own sufficient apology."

The Age of the Maccabees. By A. W. Streane, D.D. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 6s.) The author gives a sketch of the history, and an estimate of the social, political and religious condition of the Jewish people during the period from the Return (in accordance with the decree of Cyrus) till the accession of Herod the Great. He discusses the general features of the religious literature of the Maccabean age, and contributes an "Introduction" to each of the Deutero-Canonical Books, the Psalms of Solomon, the Sibyllines, the Book of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, etc. These are the chief although not the only features of this important book—a book which is well-nigh indispensable to the student of what may be designated roughly "the Maccabean period." Dr. Streane is of opinion that "the value and interest of the Deutero-Canonical Books cannot easily be exaggerated, and they well repay study." And among their many other claims which are urged is the fact that they are "a portion of the unconscious 'Praeparatio Evangelica,' paving the way for the central event in the world's history."

Commentary on the Apocrypha. (S.P.C.K., 4s.) This book, although published some years ago, is still the most "popular" commentary on the Apocrypha. The several portions of the work were entrusted to five commentators:—Bishop Christopher Wordsworth of Lincoln, Bishop Charles Wordsworth of S. Andrew's, Professor Fuller, and Canons Churton and Eddrup, of whom only the last-named survives. There is a helpful Introduction to the Apocrypha, and to each of the books thereof, and a very useful commentary based on the Authorised Version.

The Uncanonical and Apocryphal Scriptures. By W. R. Churton, B.D. (J. Whitaker, 7s. 6d.) This book contains a comprehensive text of the Apocrypha, made up of the Authorised Version together with the additional matter found in the Vulgate and other ancient versions. There are interesting and helpful Introductions to the several books and fragments, marginal notes and references, and a masterly General Introduction to the Apocrypha. Perhaps the best testimony to the value of the late Canon Churton's work is the fact that there is scarcely a writer on the Deutero-Canonical Books since 1884 who has not quoted from it. The text of III and IV Maccabees, and of the additions to Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Lamentations, is included in the book, and an index of passages in the Canonical Scriptures quoted or paraphrased in the Apocrypha.

Ecclesiasticus xxxix. 15 to xlix. 11. Translated from the original Hebrew, and arranged in parallel columns with the English Revised Version of 1895. By A. E. Cowley, M.A., and A. Neubauer, M.A., the Editors of the Hebrew text (Clarendon Press, 2s. 6d.)—Ecclesiasticus was originally composed in Hebrew, and the Hebrew text was translated into Greek and Syriac. From the Greek translation the Latin and the English Authorised and Revised Versions were made. Until recently, the Hebrew text was regarded as lost, but the portion (ch. xxxix. 15—xlix. 11) which was discovered a few years ago, is here translated. This translation gives us the clue to some of the difficulties and obscurities in Ecclesiasticus which the Revisers of 1895 were powerless to dispel; and no student of the Wisdom of Ben Sira will like to be without this little book.

Benedicite. By G. C. Child Chapman, M.D. (John Murray, 3s. 6d.) This beautiful devotional book is in its thirteenth edition—a fitting tribute to its merits. Its object is to offer a series of illustrations of the power, beneficence, and design displayed by the Creator in His works, and to show the peculiar fitness of "The Song of the Three Children" both to awaken and to express those devotional feelings by which we bless, praise and magnify the Lord of Nature. This book does much to promote meditative worship and adoration; and one lays it down with kindly thoughts towards all God's creatures, as the perfection of their structure, the interest that surrounds their habits, the uses which they serve, and the many blessings which they bring, are realised. Dr. Chaplin mentions that in a few churches the Benedicite is altogether banished from the morning service, and that Prayer-books have been published in which this Hymn finds no place. Surely prejudice against the Apocrypha is hardly as strong as this!

The Value of the Apocrypha. By Bernard J. Snell, M.A., B.Sc. (James Clarke and Co., 1s. 6d.) Mr. Snell is the Minister of the Independent Church at Brixton. He is also a brave man. On four successive Sunday evenings he gave a "lecture" to his congregation on I.—The Apocryphal Scriptures. II.—The story of the Maccabees. III.—Apocryphal legends and prophecies. IV.—The Wisdom Books. Would that many clergy of the Church of England would follow his example! The "lectures" are popular, living, and full of much valuable matter; and we wish this booklet a very wide circulation among Churchmen and Nonconformists.

Ardath. By Marie Corelli. (Methuen, 6s.) This is one of the few well-known novels based on a text from the Apocrypha:—"So I went my way into the field which is called Ardath, and sat among the flowers" II. Esdras ix. 26. It is "the story of a dead self," and a very interesting story, too. It was a favourite book of the late Lord Tennyson. One of the characters, the monk Heliobas, defending the Apocrypha as a whole, describes it "as reliable as any history ever written." This, however, is a counterblast to his companion who deems it "an utterly unreliable source of information." But the truth lies in neither of these extremes. The book contains various notable quotations from II Esdras, and chapter and verse are usually given, with a praiseworthy request from the author to the reader that the texts should be referred to in the Scriptures. It may be added that Miss Corelli is a member of the I. S. A.; and, if for no other reason, every member of the Society should read her "Ardath."

Good Words from the Apocrypha. By Hesba Stretton and H. L. Synnot. (Skeffington, 1s. 6d.) This booklet contains quotations conveniently grouped together on the subjects of creation, sin, confession, mercy, speech, friendship, benevolence, riches and poverty, the fear of the Lord, wisdom, the heathen, death, resurrection, immortality, praise, etc. It will surprise those people who imagine that the Apocrypha has no spiritual value. The selection is well-made, and the arrangement is all that could be desired.

Daily nearer God. By Haidee Elliott. (S.P.C.K., 1s. 4d.) This little book contains a verse for each day in the year selected from the Apocrypha: also twelve extracts from the writings of Bishop Gore, Canon Newbolt, and others, containing counsel and comfort on daily duties and difficulties. Miss Elliott is to be congratulated on the clever and sympathetic selection of her texts—those for the red-letter and black-letter saints' days strike us as being peculiarly apposite. We are glad that this booklet is already in its second edition.

The Art Worker's Quarterly. (Chapman and Hall, 2s. 6d.) for April contains an interesting paper by W. G. Thompson on the famous 16th century tapestries at Bisham Abbey illustrating the Story of Tobit. The reproductions are exceedingly good.

Other books received from the Oxford and Cambridge presses, J. M. Dent, Wells Gardner, S. P. C. K., etc., will be noticed next quarter.

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